24/6/74

Oblatio immolatae

①

Calvary Nursing Home
Sudbury Hill
Harrow-on-the-Hill
Middlesex

begun some days back but now ~~[illegible]~~ June 24. 1974

Dearest René

I was so pleased to get yr letter written on June 9th this morning.

When in about 1960 I wrote The Fatigue I was pretty sure that in writing that passage where the stripped mensa

is set up
when the long lance
Obliquely thrust
must drain the Cup
for here
is immolatio ablata

as meaning the ~~actual~~ actual bodily bloody flesh ~~was immolated~~ of ~~the~~ Victim, already Oblated ~~in~~ In supremae nocte coenae Recumbens cum fratribus.

I used immolatio ablata as that was a succinct technical term used by theologians – or anyway, ~~of~~ mainly by ~~theological~~ theologians of the de la Taille ~~[illegible]~~ school.

But there were ~~two~~ technical terms used of what ~~[illegible]~~ was made by the Offerand at the Supper, and another term for the Sacrifice of the ~~[illegible]~~ the Church ~~of~~ offered at Mass.

I ~~was~~ had half forgotten these two terms. I thought that one was 'oblatio immolanda', the bodily, real, bloody, immolation of necessity carried out by the execution-party and from what you say in this letter – 'the offering obliged to be ~~not~~ immolated', that was O.K.

But for some reason that I can no longer recall I could not remember ~~[illegible]~~ the term used of what the Church does in the Mass. That's why I asked ~~if~~ I had it right or quite wrong in supposing that perhaps

N.B.

Yet again I must ~~ask you~~ tell you that this muddled letter has not been read through. So heaven knows what stupid things I've said in it or things that because of ~~[illegible]~~ hiatuses ~~may~~ may mean nothing or the opposite of what I intended.

②

it could have been something like
~~it would have been~~ 'oblatio immolata' ~~'?~~ with the intended meaning of
the ~~Oblation of what had~~ the anamnesis of what had been
Oblated in the Supper-room and immolated on the Tree
nearly 20 centuries ago. That's the core of de la T's thesis
that while ~~Supper~~ the Oblation presupposed tomorrows immolation,
our Mass makes anamnesis of the entire Passion.

I've three Lat. grammars here and the blasted things
don't even give oblata in their ~~index~~ index of Latin words
& though Lewis & Short gives a page or more on immo- I
can't find immolata. The Shorter Ox. Eng. Dict. gives, of course,
'immolation' ad L. immolationem — well, damnation!
'Queen Ann's Dead',

You see, René annwyl, I ~~know~~ know properly
so terribly little Latin grammar so that
when you say in the top two lines of sheet 2
"Why should I tell you what you know so well"
is not the actual situation — I know only
the meaning of a fairish number of Latin
~~nouns~~ nouns, ~~&~~ ~~names~~ nomina & ideas &
can get the 'feel' of this & that, & the
~~Splendour~~ marvellous splendour of the poiesis
& have come to that from the Liturgy
aided enormously by what you yourself
have told me since our first meeting at
Capel — for one example when we went up
hill on the eve of the Nativity with
lanterns & picks & shovels to free the waters
& undo the carefully laid sods of earth
& so divert the mountain stream
and as we came back you told me
about Fabius Cunctator & how by this
delaying he restored the state. &
Vergil had borrowed from Ennius;
my debt to you & Harman
is very great indeed because
both of you multifariam multisque
modis were at hand and in other ways
& later Tiger Dawson & Jackson Knight.
But nothing & nobody can wholly

(note gap in text)

③

make good what is lost by not, carrying on, 'having ~~[illegible]~~ Classical languages somehow or other bashed into one's head or rather one's heart & mind & whole spirit. That ~~[illegible]~~ particular discipline gives one a so-to-say 'instrument' whereby one ~~knows how to get the hang of~~ may be unconsciously knows how to get the hang of all sorts of other things, providing one ~~[illegible]~~ has the will or desire to use it.

Ah, — yes my thought of Leofa Dei on your letter of May 22, looked & felt Anglo-Saxon, ~~[illegible]~~ (or anyway Nordic) but wondered why you chanced to use it. As I could not remember your use of ~~OE~~ an O.E. word before. It equates with annwyl as ~~[illegible]~~ I've used it on sheet ② of the letter René annwyl, meaning 'René dear'. In ordinary modern Welsh, for 'Dear Mr Evans' they would write ~~Annwyl Mr Evans~~ ~~[illegible]~~ Annwyl Mr Evans, but that is a following of the ordinary English mode of address. But to put the adjective ~~[illegible]~~ annwyl after the ~~[illegible]~~ name is not only more in keeping with the Welsh usage, ~~[illegible]~~ but is more intimate & affectionate e.g. when I writing to dear Saunders L. I would most certainly write Saunders Annwyl, or to ~~Elri~~ Elri it would most likely be ~~[illegible]~~ Elri annwylyd i.e. 'beloved' or most likely anwylaf — the suffix -af (pronounced 'av') being an intensive. af ~~[illegible]~~ is used a lot ~~[illegible]~~ as an intensive. That's why In the Sleeping Lord I refer to the beloved disciple John as Ieuan Cariadusaf 'John the Most Beloved' (page 87) cariad means simply 'love' and as John is masculine the c does not mutate to g as it would after a girl's name. pronounce ~~[illegible]~~ more or less ~~car-ee-ad-iss~~ ~~[illegible]~~ ~~car-ee-ad-iss-av~~ car-ee-ad-iss-av.

remembering that the Welsh u ~~is sound~~ is pronounced more or less as 'ee'

Curiously considering the fuss that Welsh pronunciation the letter u occasions more trouble than any other because a person knowing nothing of Welsh phonetics naturally thinks of 'u' as pronounced in the Latin ~~[illegible]~~ or English vowel .. whereas it is in South Wales pronounced as ee the same as the Welsh pronunciation of i (=ee) In North Welsh the u is slightly different but only slightly, it remains ee

④

I like O.E. Leofa, wonder what the ending a means strictly speaking.
~~the nominative was [illegible], [illegible] lufu~~
The Dict. gives under 'love' for O.E. ~~the~~ nominative lufu and I understand that O.E. is worse than German for agreements of cases, number, gender etc., ~~[illegible] "lady", [illegible] the loaf-kneader" [illegible]~~

Oh, damnation, I've now mislaid the two pages of yr letter immediately following ~~the~~ you come to use the O.E. Leofa ... I mislay everything as soon as it arrives & when I most want it & I take hours to find it again – mercifully I have refound ~~[illegible]~~ the sheets – so I see – Dr Chris Skelton, the big fellow, gave you his undergraduate O.E books which accounts for yr lēof beloved & ~~then~~ hence lēoflīc lovely, that's a beautiful word. Yes R.W.C. Chambers is fine – I've been struggling with the Dream of the Rood in various ~~[illegible]~~ degrees of modernization & sometimes bits of the stupendous original. But one can't really 'read' it without a reasonable knowledge of O.E. which I have no doubt you will quickly acquire. Middle English is another matter, but even in that, while Chaucer is fairly understandable without being a scholar, whereas Langland is next to impossible without middle-English grammar & glossaries – The Green Knyght (which I think is probably the most superb of the English contribution to Romance literature is (at least for me) quite impossible to read except in translation there is one that is more or less in the original text, with footnotes & a glossary that William Cookson gave me, which .. There is, I should say, a remarkable new scholarship + rule perception in these fields of O.E. & Middle-English. I can never remember names

but ~~for~~ a friend of William Cookson, namely? Alexander most kindly sent me a copy of his translation of a number of O.E. poems including ~~Maldon~~ that great, grim Battle of Maldon & also Beowulf & that battle one I can never spell, Finnsburg or something like that, which I think is even more moving ~~than~~ than Maldon, & also The Dream of the Rood but with latter did not seem to come off ~~nothing~~ like as well as the others. But in reading the translations & his Introduction one felt here was a chap of firm, accurate, scholarship but with a poet's mind & apperception. It is the same with more recent books from Dublin, ~~scholarly & with~~ proper scholarship wedded to a perception of the poet's mind as well. And some Welsh things (translations of the virtually impossible task of work the essential characteristic & conscious characteristic was that 'form' & 'content' must be absolutely made one. The earliest deposits are more possible to give in another speech, but the later deposits, what is called the 'Classical age of Welsh Verse' from Dafydd ap Gwilym (in the age of Chaucer) ~~to~~, say the latter part of the 15th cent, more & more strict measures when introduced by the bardic schools till the thing broke under the weight of an academicism. Though gentlemen wrote skilled ~~[illegible]~~ verses ~~[illegible]~~ right on through the confounded Tudor period. → but though that showed a love of the old metres & later still some of the Welsh gentry kept a household bard-harpist

Continues on Sheet ⑤

5

But before the death of Elizabeth I (called 'the silky one' in Wales
~~[illegible]~~ sidanfaidd is silky & think the word used
as a ~~cognate~~ cognomen was sidánnen) - anyway by 1600
& the Stuarts & Commonwealth, the Welsh gentry
were more & more ~~anglicised~~ anglicised & though still
boasting of their ~~[illegible]~~ descent from Welsh noble
families were as English as they could manage
to be - ~~leaving their peasants monoglot~~ but
It meant that the descendants of the Welsh
magnates & gentry the uchelwyr (lords)
('high-men' would be the literal translation)
were (speaking generally) cut off from
the peasants & labourers or (gwerin = folk)
in a vital, crucial, disastrous manner
~~[illegible]~~ Disraeli's novel, ~~[illegible]~~ Sibyl or
the Two Nations was ~~[illegible]~~ concerned
with the state of affairs in England.
but in Wales there were not only
'two nations' but two Sibyllae
the gentlefolk, of English speech,
sought & ~~found~~ imbibed ~~of~~ the
~~oracles~~ oracles of Oxford or
Cambridge. Oh yes they drank
deep of Latin & Greek &
some Hebrew but the medium of instruction
was wholly through the English tongue
whereas the unlettered gwerin
of their Welsh estates, clung
to the language & the traditions
conserved by that language.
The ancient habits, ~~of the dances~~
native dance & song, ~~[illegible]~~ the
superstitions & beliefs of all
sorts [illegible] varying localities
pilgrimages to ~~the~~ ~~[illegible]~~ places
in the hills, even though
the 'papist idols' had been
long thrown down, the site
was known & aged gentlewomen
(~~[illegible]~~ sent messengers) to
summon the people to the site
on the right day (this is

recorded in state papers) for all evidence of paid informers) in the reign of James I. It is as though the typical Squire ~~of~~ of the English shires, in his manor house next the Parish Church, was devoted for his own Tenacity not only by status but by the foreign language. It varied of course & some of the Welsh ~~upper strata~~ squirearchy & parsons of the Ch. of England did much to ~~[illegible]~~ help conserve the local antiquities & ancient MSS. & were intent on conserving the language. but very general speaking — the tenant farmers & the farm labourers, quarry-men etc. ~~[illegible]~~ spoke one language & their masters another, but it would take a much longer letter than this to even in outline tell you of the very complex matter, more especially of ~~[illegible]~~ the changing pattern from, say, Early Tudor period to that of ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ Queen Ann and period of the House of Hanover. Absolutely must stop now René, & such a pile of stuff unattended to — I hope my letter to Joan arrived safely. Yes, John Montague did come with an Irish friend — called I think Gareth Browne. I dont know why he got the impression that I might be going back to my dug-out in Monksdene, ~~the doctor~~ that appears to be more & more remote. I had hopes of being able to a year & more back but the Doctor has from almost the beginning said I must stay here & be looked after — & as the time passes I get more & more 'hospitalized' but I ~~am~~ am ~~continually~~ naturally worried about all my stuff being there — & have to pay the rent of course but there are all my books that I continually require for reference — apart from things of all sorts from when I was about six years old ~~&~~. Masses of stuff that clearly I must keep there, after all it ~~was~~ is my only 'home' so to say. By no means ~~[illegible]~~ ideal — but at least the only room I could find when I had to move from Mr Carlile's house on the Hill* when he died & the house was pulled down — 'taken out' like a tooth. What a world this is! Yes, dear Bernd I've not written to Barbara yet, and I'm continually worrying about the Harman & Margaret thing. Well, Bendith arnoch, very my much love to you & Joan yours as always David.

* that was an awful blow for it was the last high room I could paint or write with ease.